

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
5 April 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 1 April 2021 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In accordance with Security Council resolutions [1575 \(2004\)](#), [1639 \(2005\)](#), [1722 \(2006\)](#), [1785 \(2007\)](#), [1845 \(2008\)](#), [1895 \(2009\)](#), [1948 \(2010\)](#), [2019 \(2011\)](#), [2074 \(2012\)](#), [2123 \(2013\)](#), [2183 \(2014\)](#), [2247 \(2015\)](#), [2315 \(2016\)](#), [2384 \(2017\)](#), [2443 \(2018\)](#), [2496 \(2019\)](#), and [2549 \(2020\)](#), I have the honour to transmit herewith the letters dated 21 April 2020 and 19 March 2021 from the Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles, transmitting the fiftieth and fifty-first reports on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annexes). The reports cover the period from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**



Annex I

In accordance with Security Council resolution [1575 \(2004\)](#) and subsequent resolutions in which the Council requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, please find attached hereto the fiftieth such report (see enclosure).

(Signed) Josep **Borrell Fontelles**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) covers the period from 1 September 2019 to 29 February 2020.
2. The Security Council, in its resolutions [1575 \(2004\)](#), [1639 \(2005\)](#), [1722 \(2006\)](#), [1785 \(2007\)](#), [1845 \(2008\)](#), [1895 \(2009\)](#), [1948 \(2010\)](#), [2019 \(2011\)](#), [2074 \(2012\)](#), [2123 \(2013\)](#), [2183 \(2014\)](#), [2247 \(2015\)](#), [2315 \(2016\)](#), [2384 \(2017\)](#), [2443 \(2018\)](#) and [2496 \(2019\)](#), requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of EUFOR at six-monthly intervals. This is the fiftieth such report.

II. Security situation

3. The security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained calm and stable overall, and there was no immediate threat to the safe and secure environment during the reporting period. Stability, however, was not entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern. The factors are potentially related to security and include persistent divisive rhetoric, political instability, radicalization, endemic socioeconomic weaknesses, risk of terrorism, returning foreign fighters, organized crime, irregular migration and external influences. During the first four months of the reporting period, the risks of protracted political crisis were considered to be the main concern with regard to the safe and secure environment, but there were some positive developments at the end of 2019. The State-level Council of Ministers was formed, ending a political impasse that had lasted more than a year, since the general elections held in October 2018. However, in the run-up to the local elections held in October 2020, political tensions started to rise again. In mid-February, a new political crisis arose that threatened to block State-level institutions and decision-making at the central level. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to experience difficulties in coping with the migrant crisis, which is putting increased pressure on the scarce resources and capacities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is adding to the political friction and instability. While law enforcement agencies are technically capable of addressing threats to law and order and maintaining a safe and secure environment in their own areas of responsibility, they continue to be weakened by a lack of inter-agency and inter-entity coordination and cooperation.

III. Implementation of the 2019 strategic review of Operation Althea

4. In response to the recommendation made in the 2019 strategic review to fully implement and consolidate Operation Althea's refocusing on its core mandate, EUFOR completed a review of its intelligence capabilities and processes in order to make them more effective.
5. As recommended in the 2019 strategic review, the concept of the liaison and observation teams was also assessed within the intelligence review. In order to increase the contribution of the liaison and observation teams to Operation Althea's

intelligence processes, the inclusion of personnel with intelligence training in the teams is under consideration, together with an increase in deployments of the teams to 12 months (instead of six).

6. The recommendation made in the 2019 strategic review to include more European Gendarmerie Force personnel in EUFOR was welcomed by the Operation Commander, as it is better placed to liaise with the law enforcement agencies that are responsible for maintaining the safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The response from Member States and non-European Union contributing countries with regard to the provision of more European Gendarmerie Force personnel is ongoing.

IV. Activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

7. During the reporting period, EUFOR continued the implementation and consolidation of the recommendations agreed by Member States in the follow-up to the 2017 and 2019 strategic reviews, including a shift from the situational awareness approach to a predictive intelligence model that is more suitable for the timely deployment of the reserve forces, if required given the security situation.

8. The collective training of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted by EUFOR continued in coordination with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Sarajevo. Mainly as a result of a lack of equipment, materiel, infrastructure, financial stability and human resources, improvement in the training of those forces is slow. The Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities continued to be equally slow in fulfilling their responsibilities regarding demining, mainly owing to the absence of authorities at the State-level for more than a year following the elections of 2018. Moreover, the equipment of the armed forces' demining battalion is outdated and will stop meeting the necessary standards by the end of 2020. As the demining battalion of the armed forces is the main demining force in the country, it is vital to ensure that the equipment is replaced.

9. Overall achievement in the disposal of ammunition, weapons and explosives in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019 was poor owing to a lack of political decisions, as there was no State Government in place. The targets that were set out in the master plan for ammunition, weapons and explosives were not met in most areas. A positive development in the disposal of small arms and weapons was observed in the country, and the targets for their registration and marking were reached. At the end of January 2020, approximately 52 per cent of small and light weapons from the total stock of the country's armed forces has been marked and registered, which equates to 100 per cent of the targets set out in the master plan. However, substantial work still needs to be done before the registration and marking of small arms and weapons is completely finalized and actual disposal and destruction can begin. The process of disposal and destruction should begin in mid-2020, but this is unconfirmed at this stage.

V. Outlook

10. Operation Althea continues to adapt and evolve, in view of the fact that stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entrenched owing to several remaining internal and external factors of concern. In the period ahead, EUFOR will continue to implement the outcomes of the 2017 and 2019 strategic reviews. EUFOR tasks will remain under regular review by the Council of the European Union.

Annex II

In accordance with Security Council resolution [1575 \(2004\)](#) and subsequent resolutions in which the Council requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, please find attached hereto the fifty-first report (see enclosure).

(Signed) Josep **Borrell Fontelles**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) covers the period from 1 March to 31 August 2020.
2. The Security Council, in its resolutions [1575 \(2004\)](#), [1639 \(2005\)](#), [1722 \(2006\)](#), [1785 \(2007\)](#), [1845 \(2008\)](#), [1895 \(2009\)](#), [1948 \(2010\)](#), [2019 \(2011\)](#), [2074 \(2012\)](#), [2123 \(2013\)](#), [2183 \(2014\)](#), [2247 \(2015\)](#), [2315 \(2016\)](#), [2384 \(2017\)](#), [2443 \(2018\)](#) and [2496 \(2019\)](#), requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of EUFOR at six-monthly intervals. This is the fifty-first such report.

II. Security situation

3. During the reporting period, there was no major change in the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the previous report. The political tensions continued to be the main driver of instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but there was no major threat to the safe and secure environment. Overall, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) restrictions had a significant impact during the reporting period.
4. On 17 June 2020, a political agreement was reached between the main coalition parties (the Croatian Democratic Community and the Party of Democratic Action), which allowed for local elections to be held in the city of Mostar for the first time since 2008. Political leaders also reached an agreement on further electoral reform. The Central Election Commission set the date for the local elections to be held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 November 2020, and in the city of Mostar on 20 December 2020. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to experience difficulties in coping with the migration situation, which was used by all sides for campaign purposes ahead of the local elections. Law enforcement agencies continue to be weakened by a lack of inter-agency and inter-entity coordination and cooperation.

III. Activities of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and implementation of the 2019 strategic review

5. In response to the recommendation set out in the 2019 strategic review to fully implement and consolidate Operation Althea's refocusing on its core mandate, EUFOR continued to implement the process to make its intelligence capabilities and processes more effective.
6. The reporting period was strongly marked by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite the difficulties faced by EUFOR owing to a number of cases among personnel, especially at the onset of the pandemic, emergency plans were implemented quickly and the force was able to successfully maintain its operational posture and capabilities. By the end of the reporting period, COVID-19 still constituted a challenge that needed to be dealt with by the Operation.

7. Although EUFOR continued, to the extent possible, to plan, organize, coordinate and conduct collective training with the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to monitor their interoperability and operational capabilities towards peace support and disaster relief operations, the pandemic had a severe impact on cooperation with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sense that the collective training of those armed forces practically ceased.

8. The COVID-19 crisis has also further delayed the achievement of the 2020 targets for the disposal of ammunition, weapons and explosives. With regard to demining, the demining battalion of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be in a critical logistic situation given that it needs funding to renew its essential equipment, which is outdated and will no longer meet the necessary standards by the end of 2020. As the demining battalion is the main demining force in the country, it remains vital to ensure that this equipment is replaced.

9. COVID-19 pandemic restrictions also limited interactions between EUFOR and the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the liaison and observation teams around the country have proved to be valuable tool in maintaining the situational awareness of EUFOR.

IV. Outlook

10. Operation Althea continues to adapt and evolve, in view of the fact that stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entrenched and that the security situation could be affected by several internal and external factors of concern. In the period ahead, EUFOR will continue to implement the outcomes of the 2017 and 2019 strategic reviews. EUFOR tasks will remain under regular review by the Council of the European Union.
